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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2768

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 000941

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STATE FOR G (J.FERRAO), DRL/MLGA (G.PAZ), AND EUR/AGS
(Y.SAINT-ADRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/24/2017
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [UNGA](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [SZ](#)
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES: SWISS COMMITTED, BUT
NOT ENTHUSIASTIC

REF: STATE 129764

Classified By: POL/ECON Counselor Stanley Otto; reason 1.4(d).

¶1. (SBU) Poloff met September 21 with Tim Enderlin, Chief of UNSC Affairs for the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA), and delivered the reftel message outlining U.S. priorities for the Community of Democracies (CD) in preparation for the October 1 meeting on the margins of the UNGA and the biennial Ministerial that will be hosted by Mali in November. Simon Pidoux, EDA expert on UN human rights and public/parliamentary outreach issues, joined Enderlin in the meeting. Enderlin said that Switzerland's UN PermRep likely will attend the October 1 meeting in New York, since Swiss President (and Foreign Minister) Calmy-Rey will already have returned to Switzerland by that time.

¶2. (C) Turning to substantive issues, Enderlin emphasized that Switzerland fully subscribes to the general goals and objectives of the CD, but has some concerns about the "transparency" of the CD in practice, specifically with a view to how decisions are made regarding which countries are invited to participate. He commented that the CD perhaps should look at ways to "democratize" its method for deciding who can participate. Enderlin also questioned the practical role of the CD within the UN system, and whether such a diverse group of states as those that participate in the CD in fact form a core of truly "like-minded" states for the purpose of concerted action. He remarked that there are many forums within the UN system that have overlap in their activities and objectives, and suggested that existing institutions should be streamlined to achieve efficiencies. Enderlin also stated that, within the UN system, the Swiss focus and priority in the context of democracy and human rights would remain the Human Rights Council.

¶3. (C) Pidoux, sounding similar themes, underlined that the CD is "fully in line with Swiss law and views," but suggested that the functioning of the CD is not optimal. He commented that he is not aware of any practical problems the CD has addressed or resolved to date. Regarding the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), both Enderlin and Pidoux emphasized that, for political reasons, the Swiss government favors funding specific projects over providing contributions to general activity funds. They doubted, therefore, that Switzerland would make a contribution to the UNDEF. Comment: The feedback from Enderlin and Pidoux indicates that the Swiss are committed in principle to the CD, but are not enthusiastic. While critical of the CD processes, neither Enderlin nor Pidoux had specific suggestions for improving the functioning of the CD. Neither disputed the point that the CD can play an important role in promoting democratic

reform and progress, both within participating states and those states not yet invited to participate. End comment.
CONEWAY